

# final thoughts and future goals...

## A few thoughts from the coordinator...

When I was hired for this position, I thought "This is great, I will be helping the community reduce underage drinking". What I didn't realize is that this community had the strength, fortitude, and heart to help themselves. They just needed the tools to get there and a venue to come together to share their skills and experience.

Together, we have learned a lot over the last few years.

We have learned how to celebrate our strengths without forgetting about the concern we have for our future. We have learned the importance of working **with** our youth instead of working **on** our youth and we have learned that a small group of people can make a big difference!

Youth are truly the experts! We have invited them to the table and asked them to participate in the decision making and they have not disappointed us.

I, personally, have taken more than I had ever hoped from this experience and although this particular grant funding is over, there are still many ways in which we will continue to work toward a healthier Yellow Medicine County. I am grateful for the opportunity to be included in such an important journey and I am looking forward to what the future holds for prevention in the county.

## Future Goals

Sustainability has been a topic of many conversations among coalition members this year. We have applied for new grants and are awaiting additional funding opportunities, but in reality, our efforts will always be sustained. We cannot unlearn what we have learned. We will continue to work at passing new laws and regulations, we will continue to educate the community and we will continue to nudge the citizens of this county to a more healthy way of life.



## contents >>>

Who we are  
Youth Groups  
Positive Community Norms  
Accomplishments  
Next Steps



## Annual Report

July 1st, 2010 to June 30th, 2011

# Chemical Health Coalition Of Yellow Medicine County

## Vision Statement

Promoting safe and healthy YOUTH and COMMUNITIES in Yellow Medicine County through the prevention of substance use/abuse.

## Mission Statement

Yellow Medicine County communities uniting to reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use/abuse.

## Chemical Health Coalition of Yellow Medicine County

1004 10th Avenue  
Clarkfield, Mn. 56223

ann.orren@co.ym.mn.gov  
www.co.ym.mn.gov

## Who we are!

The Chemical Health Coalition of Yellow Medicine County began in 2006 as a result of a grant awarded to PACT for Families Collaborative through the Mn. Department of Human Services, ADAD.

Community members formed a group that meets monthly to assess the needs of the community regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use/abuse. Participants include parents, law enforcement, social services, school personnel, youth, government officials, civic groups, business and others interested in making a change.

The coalition activities consist mainly of environmental strategies, which aim at creating an environment that makes it easier for people to act in healthy ways.

Environmental strategies include:

1. Improving laws/policies
2. Altering community norms, perceptions, and attitudes
3. Reducing availability or access to substances
4. Educating the community; adults and youth

Coalition activities include; community presentations, alcohol free activities, supporting youth group activities, distributing educational information, working toward improving local alcohol ordinances, and providing curriculum in the schools.



Look us up on the web  
[www.co.ym.mn.gov](http://www.co.ym.mn.gov)



# YOUTH GROUPS!!

Three area schools have formed youth groups, and work throughout the year hosting events, giving presentations, and serving as role models for their peers. The youth groups have hosted events such as bean bag tournaments, Kidz Night Out, Party in the Backyard, and Jr. High dances. They have walked in area parades and held contests during athletic events to increase awareness.



Representatives from each youth group attend monthly coalition meetings and are an integral part of the decision making process.



Area schools sent students to Brainerd, Mn. for a two day Youth Leadership Academy in December 2010. This year the theme was Live Out Loud. The students learned about dynamic leadership, marketing strategies, and effective public speaking. Students from around the State gathered to share their experiences and to learn from one another. Everyone had a great time!



## Other Coalition Activities...

This year the coalition has focused much of its attention on proposing a **Social Host Ordinance**. We began by creating a subcommittee and making a plan. The ordinance was proposed to the county board in the fall of 2010 and passed on November 10th. Since that time, coalition members have been attending individual city council meetings and proposing the same ordinance in each city. So far, Canby, Clarkfield, and Granite Falls have also passed the same ordinance as the county. Members will continue to attend city council meetings and propose the ordinance in the remaining cities.

The Yellow Medicine County Sheriff's Department has worked with the coalition to conduct **alcohol compliance checks** twice per year. These checks have been successful, with a large majority of the businesses passing.

The coalition continues to provide **Beverage Server Training** in the county to all businesses which have a liquor license. This training is designed to educate businesses about the rules/regulations involved in selling alcohol as well as how to check for fake ID cards and how to refrain from over-serving customers. This training is held at least twice per year.

Each of the schools in the county have taught the **Project Northland** curriculum over the last 4 years. The program was designed by prevention researchers to delay the age when youth begin drinking, to reduce use among young people who have tried alcohol, to limit the use of other drugs, and to reduce alcohol-related problems.

Throughout this grant, coalition members have had the opportunity to attend local, state and national conferences to expand their knowledge of prevention. Members attended conferences in Montana, Denver, and Phoenix this past year.

## Join Us!

The Chemical Health Coalition of Yellow Medicine County is an organization open to ALL interested residents in Yellow Medicine County.

Meetings are held monthly. For time and location, contact:

Ann Orren, Coordinator  
1004 10th Avenue  
Clarkfield, Mn. 56223

507-829-2241  
ann.orren@co.ym.mn.gov  
www.co.ym.mn.gov

Funding for this project is provided by the Mn. Department of Human Services, ADAD and PACT for Families Collaborative.

# Positive Community Norms



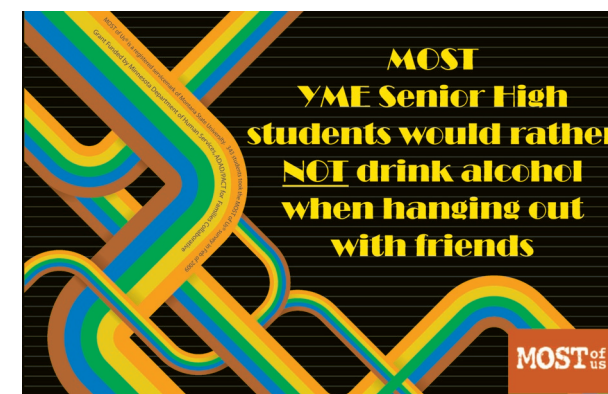
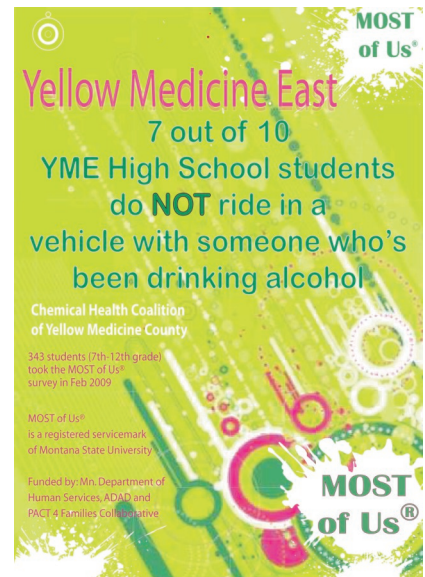
## What is Positive Community Norms?

The Positive Community Norms project, otherwise known as MOST of Us® project, is a media campaign designed to correct the misperceptions in the school and the community regarding underage drinking. By focusing on the positive in our community, we can spread the word that most of our students are making healthy choices.

It's exciting to tell the community that the majority of our kids are making good decisions regarding alcohol use. We do this by creating media with positive messages and posting them in the school and in the community. We are constantly looking to the youth to tell us where they get their information, what kind of information they believe, and what colors and designs they find engaging. They are our experts and we are looking to them to guide us in this process.

We are working with Jeff Linkenbach, from Montana State University, on the project. Student surveys have been conducted in the YME school district and media materials have been created and circulated in the community.

MOST of Us® is a registered servicemark of Montana State University.



### Good Job Parents!

**MOST parents of YME High School students do NOT allow teens to drink alcohol in their homes.**

Here are a few more ways to help keep your children safe:

1. Establish rules and consequences about alcohol. No underage drinking-NO exceptions!
2. Set a good example; don't drink in excess in front of your children and NEVER drink and drive.
3. Know your child's friends and their parents. Create a dialog with other parents to ensure you agree with their rules.
4. Know where your children are and who they are with.
5. Let your child know MOST YME teens are choosing NOT to drink! MOST YME HS students do NOT drink in a typical month.\*

Funds provided by the Mn. Department of Human Services, ADAD and PACT 4 Families Collaborative. MOST of Us® is a registered servicemark of Montana State University. \*343 YME students (7th-12th grade) took the MOST of Us survey in Feb. 2009.